IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please delete the first full paragraph corresponding to "Cross-Reference to the Related Applications," and replace the corresponding paragraph on page 1 of the specification:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Utility Patent Application Serial No. 09/892,593, filed in the USPTO on June 27, 2001 by Ferguson et al., which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Utility Patent Application Serial No. 09/433,449, filed November 4, 1999, U.S. Utility Patent Application Serial No. 09/434,036, filed November 4, 1999, and U.S. Utility Patent Application Serial No. 09/619,190, filed July 19, 2000, which claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/254,506 filed in the USPTO on December 8, 2000 by Thorne et al., U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/275,810, filed on March 14, 2001, U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/275,886, filed March 14, 2001 and U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/296,968 filed in the USPTO on June 8, 2001 by Barrus et al., the entire contents of each of these applications being hereby incorporated by reference herein.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 33 and 38 as follows:

1. (Amended) A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion and a proximal portion; and

a shield including at least one elongated part, the shield having a proximal end mounted with the proximal portion of the needle and a distal end mounted with a planar contact surface, the planar contact surface including a needle linear bearing that slidably facilitates movement of the needle relative to the shield, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield.

2. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a needle hub configured to support the proximal portion of the needle.

3. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the needle hub includes an appendage.

4. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the appendage has at least one opening to facilitate manipulation thereof.

5. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 3, wherein the appendage has at least one wing for manipulation thereof.

6. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the shield includes at least one segment.

7. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the distal portion of the needle is angularly displaced approximately 90 degrees from the proximal portion.

8. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

9. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the segment defines a channel.

10. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the segment defines a channel and the shield has a slider configured for slidable movement with the channel.

11. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the shield includes a latch engageable with the needle.

12. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the latch includes a latch arm for maintaining the shield in the extended position.

13. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the latch includes a plurality of surfaces configured to maintain the shield in the extended position.

14. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the latch includes an arcuate surface engageable with the needle.

15. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a longitudinal axis which is angularly displaced relative to a longitudinal axis defined by a proximal portion of the needle; and

a shield mounted with the needle and extensible, via a needle guide movably

guiding the needle, between a retracted position and an extended position.

16. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a needle hub configured to support the proximal portion of the needle.

17. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the needle hub includes an appendage.

18. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the appendage has at least one opening to facilitate manipulation thereof.

19. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the appendage has at least one wing for manipulation thereof.

20. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the shield includes at least one segment.

21. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the distal portion of the needle is angularly displaced approximately 90 degrees from the proximal portion.

22. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein a distal end of the shield is attached to a planar contact surface.

23. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

24. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein a distal end of the shield is hingedly attached to a planar contact surface.

25. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein a distal end of the shield is releasably attached to a planar contact surface.

26. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

27. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the segment defines a channel.

28. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 20, wherein the segment defines a channel and the shield has a slider configured for slidable movement with the channel.

29. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the shield includes a latch engageable with the needle.

30. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the latch includes a latch arm for maintaining the shield in the extended position.

31. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the latch includes a plurality of surfaces configured to maintain the shield in the extended position.

32. (Withdrawn) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the latch includes an arcuate surface engageable with the needle.

33. (Amended) A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a longitudinal axis which is angularly displaced relative to a longitudinal axis defined by a proximal portion of the needle; and

a shield including at least one elongated part, the shield having a proximal end mounted with the proximal portion of the needle and a distal end mounted with a planar contact surface, the planar contact surface including a needle linear bearing that slidably facilitates movement of the needle relative to the shield, the shield being extensible between a retracted position and an extended position via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield.

34. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the planar contact surface includes a plurality of openings.

35. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the planar contact surface includes an anchor part.

36. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the distal end of the shield is hingedly attached to the planar contact surface.

37. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the planar contact surface includes a pad for engagement with a subject.

38. (Amended) A safety shield apparatus comprising:

a needle having a distal portion defining a longitudinal axis which is angularly displaced relative to a longitudinal axis defined by a proximal portion of the needle; and

a shield means, mounted with the needle and extensible between a retracted position and an extended position, for preventing hazardous exposure to the distal portion of the needle, the shield means having a planar body contacting surface, the planar body contacting surface including a needle linear bearing that slidably facilitates movement of the needle relative to the shield via fixed positioning of the planar contact surface relative to movement of the shield.

39. (Original) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 38, further comprising a latch means engageable with the needle for maintaining the shield means in the extended position.

40. (Previously Presented) A safety shield apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the planar contact surface includes texturing.